



## Early Journal Content on JSTOR, Free to Anyone in the World

This article is one of nearly 500,000 scholarly works digitized and made freely available to everyone in the world by JSTOR.

Known as the Early Journal Content, this set of works include research articles, news, letters, and other writings published in more than 200 of the oldest leading academic journals. The works date from the mid-seventeenth to the early twentieth centuries.

We encourage people to read and share the Early Journal Content openly and to tell others that this resource exists. People may post this content online or redistribute in any way for non-commercial purposes.

Read more about Early Journal Content at <http://about.jstor.org/participate-jstor/individuals/early-journal-content>.

JSTOR is a digital library of academic journals, books, and primary source objects. JSTOR helps people discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content through a powerful research and teaching platform, and preserves this content for future generations. JSTOR is part of ITHAKA, a not-for-profit organization that also includes Ithaka S+R and Portico. For more information about JSTOR, please contact [support@jstor.org](mailto:support@jstor.org).

**MARRIAGE AMONG THE PAWNEES.**

BY GEORGE BIRD GRINNELL.

In the olden time, before they had horses, when their dogs, their simple arms, and their clothing constituted all their possessions, the Pawnees married for love. The affection which existed between two young people was then the only motive which brought about a union, and this affection was seldom interfered with, unless there was a very great difference between the social standing of the family of the boy and the girl, for it must be understood that, even in primitive times, rank existed in a Pawnee camp just as it does to-day in civilized society.

It is generally believed that among Indians the securing a wife is a mere matter of purchase and sale—a bargain by which the girl is sold by her father to the highest bidder. This is by no means an exact statement of the facts, yet something very like it is now, or has been recently, true of many tribes. I am not prepared to deny that the existing custom is almost purely a commercial one, but I do not believe that this used to be the case.

It is difficult to reach any definite decision in a matter of this kind, but my inquiries among the Pawnees lead me to conclude that in earlier times the purchase of a wife was unknown, and that this commercial view of marriage is one of comparatively modern growth. It is easy to see how such a custom might spring up, and how, having once been established, it might become permanent.

After the Pawnees obtained horses and began to accumulate property—as the people acquired wealth and their circumstances became easier—the practice arose of giving presents to the immediate relatives of the girl whose hand was sought in marriage. These presents were given in order to conciliate those relations who controlled the girl. Originating merely in this desire to gain the good will of her family, the custom gradually became more and more firmly established, until it had come to be a matter of course to give presents, and finally a matter of necessity, if the young man hoped to gain the consent of the girl's family to his proposal of marriage. The presents at first were probably small in value and number, but in a

case where there was more than one suitor for the girl there would naturally be a rivalry on the part of the families of the young men, and each would strive to help the cause of its own member by presenting gifts more valuable than those offered by the other. Young men of standing and position would naturally put forth every effort to make to the families of the women they loved presents as handsome as had their fellows who had already married, and all this would have its influence on families who counted marriageable girls among their number. Parents and relatives, at first receiving these presents as evidences of friendship and good will, would at length come to regard them as their due, and would ultimately insist on receiving them as a condition of giving their consent to the marriage proposals, thinking themselves injured, and even defrauded, if they were not forthcoming ; so, little by little, the matter of obtaining a wife grew to be regarded, not only by the suitor and the girl's father, but by the tribe at large, as an actual purchase of the woman.

Among the Pawnees, however, these presents were not always, nor, I believe, even usually, regarded as a price paid for the girl. They did not speak of them otherwise than as presents made to her family. Often the gifts were not decided on until after the marriage had taken place. A father would give his daughter to a young man of good family or one who was well to do without making any stipulations as to what the presents should be, and a Pawnee young man might say "I am going to marry such a girl. It is left to me what I shall do afterward." (*Tüt kitta wi iri la tits ka, li'l küt.*)

A young man did not expect to marry until he had come to be an expert hunter, and so was able to support a wife. This gave him standing with the parents, who would naturally be more willing to give their daughter to a good provider. Nor did he usually think about taking a wife until he had been on the war-path and had either brought back some horses or had struck an enemy. This would give him favor in the eyes of the young women.

When a young man had determined that he wished to marry, he perhaps courted the girl in the usual way, or, if he had no fondness for any particular young woman, he spoke to his parents and announced to them his wish to take a wife.

Courtship among the Pawnees was carried on in the same way as with many other tribes of the Plains Indians. The young man took his stand at some convenient point where he was likely to see the young woman and waited for her appearance. He might place him-

self near her father's lodge or farther off. Usually there was no concealment about the matter. Favorite places for waiting were near the trail which led down to the water or to the spot usually resorted to for gathering wood. The lover, wrapped in his robe or blanket, which covered his whole person except his eyes, waited here for the girl, and as she made her appearance stepped up to her and threw his blanket about her, holding her in his arms. If she was favorably inclined to him, she made no resistance, and they might stand there concealed by the blanket, which entirely covered them, talking to one another for hours. If she did not favor him, she would at once free herself from his embrace and go away. It was in this way that the Pawnee lover told his sweetheart of his love and won her heart.

When the young man had determined that he wished to take a wife, if he indicated the girl, his family—that is, his parents and his more important relatives—talked the matter over and considered the qualifications of the young woman whom he had chosen. The first point to be discussed was her family, then her ability to work well, her temper, attractiveness, etc. In case the boy had merely decided that he wished to marry and had not himself made a choice, his relations talked the matter over and selected a girl. This having been done, some old man was called in and asked to conduct the negotiations between the two families. Usually, if it was convenient, the man selected for this purpose—at least among the Skidi—was a priest, one greased with the sacred fat of the buffalo. Such a man's influence with the family he was about to visit would be stronger than that of a common man, and he would be more likely to receive a favorable answer.

On a chosen day this old man and the suitor would prepare themselves for a visit to the lodge of the girl's father. The old man would paint his face with red earth, while the boy would also paint himself, put beads about his neck, and don his best attire, his finest leggings and moccasins, worked with quills or beads. Both then put on their robes, hair side out, and late in the afternoon, about 4 or 5 o'clock, they started toward the lodge where the girl lived, the old man leading the way, the young one following at his heels.

Of course, when the people of the camp saw an old man followed by a young one, both wearing their robes hair side out, walking through the village, they knew that a proposal of marriage was going to be made, and usually a pretty shrewd guess could be

hazarded as to the lodge they were going to. If the father of any girl suspected that his lodge was to be visited, he would hurry home, to be there to receive the ambassador and aspirant.

When the men reached the lodge, they entered and squatted by the fire just to the right of the door, ready to take their departure if they were not made welcome. If the father was at home, he would speak to the old man, who would explain to him the object of the visit. Then the visitors would go out of the lodge and return to that of the boy's family. It might sometimes happen that there was more than one marriageable girl in the lodge, and then, in the absence of the father, the oldest person in the lodge would enquire of the old man which girl it was whose hand was sought, and after learning would ask the visitors to go home and return later.

The same evening they would come back to the lodge and find there many or most of the girl's relations. Those who were unable to come have sent word that they agree to whatever the others may decide on. These relations have thoroughly discussed the young man, his social standing, his skill as a hunter, his prowess in war, and his general desirability as a member of the family, and have determined what answer shall be made to the offer of marriage. When the two men enter the lodge the second time, if they see a robe or blanket spread for them to sit on, they know that they are welcome and that the answer will be favorable. If no seat is provided they go away at once; their proposal is declined.

After speeches have been made by the girl's relations one of them takes a pipe and lights it. He prays, blows a few puffs to the sky, to the earth, and to the four cardinal points, and then offers it to the old man, saying, as he does so, "I hope that you will take pity on us, for we are poor." This seems to be at once an expression of good feeling and a hope that the young people may get along well together—may have no trouble after they are married.

The old man smokes first, and then the relation offers the pipe to the suitor, who does the same, both saying *Lá-wa iri*. When this has been done, the two rise and retire, the old man taking the robe or blanket on which they have been sitting as his present from the girl's relations. On returning to the young man's lodge they report to his relations assembled there the result of their visit, and satisfaction is expressed at its favorable outcome. The presents for the girl's family are now contributed by the boy's relations. They consist of blankets, robes, guns, horses, and so on, and are usually

taken on the same night to the lodge where the girl lives by one of the young man's female relations, his mother, aunt, or sister. On being received they are distributed among the relations of the girl.

Early next morning the young man is invited for the first time over to the lodge where the girl lives. Before he arrives the girl has combed her hair, put on her best clothing, and is sitting on a robe in the most honorable seat, far back in the lodge. When the young man comes in a cushion or pillow is placed by the side of the girl, and her father or some of her relations tells him to sit down by her side. The girl then rises and takes a dish containing food, which she places before him, and they both eat. The girl is now his wife, and he stays here and makes his home in her father's lodge for a time, usually until he has some children and feels that he can set up a lodge of his own.

Within a few days after this a feast is given by the girl's relations for the young man and his relatives, at which speeches are made, in honor of the young man and woman. Later the relations of the young man give a feast to the girl's relations, and again speeches are made. Some time afterward some of the girl's relatives would give the young man a horse or two, and it was the custom that those who had received horses from the relations of the man should return them to him, but it must be some time after the marriage, and the horses returned must not be the same which had been given by the boy's relations. As nearly as I can discover, these presents did not in earlier times in any sense constitute a price paid for the girl, but were really wedding gifts, most of which ultimately came back to the young man.

This was the formal and ceremonious mode of bringing about a marriage among the Pawnees, but of course it was not always done in this way. Sometimes the young man conducted the negotiations himself, as stated by Mr. J. B. Dunbar, and sometimes, in order to avoid the danger of being subjected to the slight of a public refusal, he might induce his mother or aunt privately to sound the girl's father and mother before formally proposing for her. If they refused to receive him, the young man, if the girl loved him, might "steal" her—that is, might elope with her—and go off and live for awhile with one of the other bands, until the anger of her relations had had time to cool off or his family had amicably settled the matter for him by giving presents of horses and other articles. If, however, the young people were caught running away both might be badly beaten.

It was not infrequently the case, where a girl had two or three suitors, that her parents might wish her to marry one, while she preferred another. Very severe measures were often resorted to in order to force her to marry the one chosen by the family, and unless she could succeed in running away with the man of her choice she almost always has to yield to the family influence.

Younger sisters were the potential wives of the husband of the oldest girl. If a married man died, his wives became the wives of his oldest brother.

In later times, when the Pawnees were very poor and had few horses, the presents given to the girl's family became less valuable, and often were merely robes.

Divorces were unusual, and, as a rule, occurred only for infidelity; but even in that case the husband was quite likely to savagely beat his wife and then condone the fault. I knew of one case, however, in which a man shot and killed his unfaithful wife, and in this action he was supported by public opinion. The lover might be killed by the injured husband, or some of his horses shot, in which case he had no remedy, public sentiment being almost always with the husband. If a woman was for any cause sent back to her father, the presents given at the time of her marriage were not returned. If a man eloped with a married woman, his relations could sometimes arrange for an amicable settlement with the injured husband by returning to him presents equivalent in value to those originally given to the girl's family; but there were cases where no payment would be accepted and the husband waited for years, but was at last avenged on his enemy.

On the whole, the Pawnee women were virtuous, and in this respect stood higher than those of most of the Plains tribes of which I know anything, except the Cheyennes, who, as is well known, are notable for the virtue of their women.

A word or two with regard to the position of the wife in the household may not be out of place here. The Indian woman, it is usually thought, is a mere drudge and slave, but, so far as my observations extend, this notion is wholly an erroneous one. It is true that the women were the laborers of the camp; that they did all the hard work about which there was no excitement. They cooked, brought wood and water, dried the meat, dressed the robes, made the clothing, collected the lodge poles, packed the horses, cultivated the ground, and generally performed all the tasks which might be called menial, but they were not mere servants. On the contrary,

their position was very respectable. They were consulted on many subjects, not only in connection with family affairs, but in more important and general matters. Sometimes women were even admitted to the councils and spoke there, giving their advice. This privilege was very unusual and was granted only to women who had performed some deed which was worthy of a man. This in practice meant that she had killed or counted coup on an enemy or had been to war. Mr. Dunbar has spoken to me of one woman whom he knew as having been admitted to the councils of the men and who died about 1860. Her name was *Stē shár u lauh*, "The Woman Chief," and she gained her pre-eminence by interfering in behalf of, and saving from death, a captive Dakota child, which an important man wished to kill in revenge for the death of one of his relations slain by the Sioux. The saving of this child created a great sensation at the time. After that the opinions of this woman were highly respected by the tribe. "She was like a man." Sometimes, it is said, a woman who was supposed to possess unusual power—was a great doctor or worker of magic, *ti wár uksti*—would be admitted to the councils of the chiefs and warriors. In the Pawnee stories mention is sometimes made of such heroines.

In ordinary family conversation women did not hesitate to interrupt and correct their husbands when the latter made statements with which they did not agree, and the men listened to them with respectful attention, though of course this depended on the standing of the woman, her intelligence, etc. While their lives were hard and full of toil, they yet found time to get together for gossip and for gambling, and on the whole managed to take a good deal of pleasure in life.

Much of what is said above comes from members of the Skidi band of the Pawnees, which division of the tribe, as is well known, had some customs which were different from those of the Lower Village Tribes or true Pawnees.

---

At the annual commencement of the Jefferson Medical College, Philadelphia, on the 15th of April, the honorary degree of Doctor of Laws was conferred on Dr. Daniel G. Brinton, of Philadelphia, in recognition of his scientific researches in the fields of anthropology and ethnology.

MUSEUM OF AMERICAN ARCHÆOLOGY.—The founding of a Museum of Archæology in the fall of 1889 by the University of Pennsylvania is an event of especial interest to the archæologists of this country. The primary object of the museum is to obtain a representative collection of American antiquities for the purpose of exhibition and study, and a fine start was immediately made by the purchase or donation of several important collections. Dr. C. C. Abbott, the well-known archæologist, was appointed curator, and his first annual report as such was published in October, 1890. The museum once an assured fact, the original plan in its wider scope was soon unfolded, and the "University Archæological Association" was formed for the purpose of obtaining funds for the prosecution of explorations and of enlisting in the general work the aid of cultivated people.

This association now has a membership of over two hundred, its president being the well-known Americanist, Dr. D. G. Brinton. The museum is directed by a board of managers appointed equally by the trustees of the university and the association, Dr. William Pepper, provost of the university, being the president.

The energetic way in which the affairs of the museum have been administered is apparent from the fact that the number of specimens in the museum at the close of the first year reached a total of over twelve thousand, while now they number over twenty thousand. Though primarily designed to be a museum of American archæology, the scope of the institution is not limited to this continent, nor strictly to archæology, as already many objects illustrative of the arts and customs of the natives of distant parts of the world have found their way into its cases. In the spring of 1889 Dr. John Peters took charge of an expedition in the interest of the university into Babylonia, and the work is now incorporated into the plans of the museum. Funds contributed to Egyptian exploratory work have also returned in the shape of valuable collections.

Altogether, the new Museum of Archæology promises to be one of the most important institutions of its kind in this country, and to be a weighty factor in the cause of general scientific education, as well as in the work of rescuing from oblivion a knowledge of the former inhabitants of this country.

H. W. HENSHAW.